

The Weekly Colonist.

Tuesday, November 15, 1864.

THE KOOTENAY REPORT.

The report of Mr. Birch, the Colonial Secretary of British Columbia, on the Kootenay country, was at length placed before our readers. It is evident from this document that the trail by way of Rook Creek is not the one which will enable the traders of Vancouver Island and British Columbia to compete with their American neighbors.

By a letter in the Columbian from one of the exploring party by Kamloops Lake we have so far the assurance that the route to the Columbia river via Yale is one easily traversed. The exploring party had reached the Columbia all right and were about to test its navigable capacity.

From Yale, the land travel will be only 170 miles, 110 of which, as we have said, is already a good wagon road, leaving, therefore, but sixty to be made. The water communication will be a little over 300 miles. It is evident, therefore, if we can only be certain that the Columbia is navigable for the stretch alluded to, that we can lay even Oregon provisions down cheaper at the Kootenay mines than the Oregon traders can themselves.

The report of Mr. Birch throws much additional light on the Kootenay country, and gives us the pleasing assurance that the heads of the Government of British Columbia are intent on finding out for themselves the nature of the mines and the routes best adapted to secure their trade.

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GRAND VICE-REGAL BALL AT NEW WESTMINSTER.

The ball given by His Excellency the Governor of British Columbia on Tuesday evening, the 8th inst., far eclipsed anything of the kind ever undertaken in either colony, and requires more than a passing notice.

The invitations to the ball were generally extended to residents in and around New Westminster and the up river towns as well as to officers of the army and navy on this station, and many of the officials, members of the Legislature and prominent residents on this island.

The Fidelity brought a few invited guests from Nanaimo. At about half-past eight the capacious ball room began to fill. His Excellency Governor Seymour, in the handsome uniform of the Service, attended by the Honorable A. N. Birch, Colonial Secretary, D. C. Maunsell, Esquire, Private Secretary, and accompanied by Governor Kennedy, Mrs. and the Misses Kennedy, Admiral the Hon. J. Dorman and Mr. Deane, Captain Sullivan, R. N., Lieut. Sir Lambton Lorraine, R. N., and other distinguished visitors at Government House, was in waiting to receive the guests, who numbered probably about 200.

The dancing commenced at 9 o'clock and continued until midnight when the doors of the supper room were thrown open disclosing one of the most elegant and tastefully arranged tables that we have seen at any private entertainment. In the midst of innumerable delicacies rose a magnificent silver chased candelabrum which was the object of universal admiration.

ROUTE TO KOOTENAY.

The British Columbian has received a letter, written by a member of the expedition under Mr. Tanner, which left Yale on the 23rd of October for the purpose of exploring for a route to the Kootenay country, from which we make the following extract.

The waters of Lakes Kamloops and Shuswap and the river connecting them are navigable for ordinary river steamers from Savannah's Ferry at the foot of Lake Kamloops to the head of Lake Shuswap, a distance of about 120 miles.

From Shuswap Lake to the Columbia River a wagon road can be built over the divide we followed, the summit of which is from 1,500 to 1,700 feet above the level of the lake, and at the time we crossed was covered with snow from one to two feet in depth for a distance of about two miles on each side of the divide or summit. The snow has fallen very recently, and is fast disappearing again.

The length of the wagon road would be from 40 to 45 miles, and the summit of the divide about 15 miles from the Columbia River.

OFFICIAL REPORT ON KOOTENAY.

From the British Columbia Government Gazette we obtain the following report of the late official trip to the Kootenay country by Mr. Colonial Secretary Birch:

COLONIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE, New Westminster, 31st October, 1864.

SIR.—I have the honor to report to you my return from visiting the Kootenay District. I much regret that my absence has been prolonged beyond the time I had anticipated, in consequence of the far greater distance of the Mining portion of that District from the town of Hope than I had been led to expect from the reports that had reached New Westminster before my departure.

Leaving Hope on the 2nd September, in company with the Hon. Mr. Esch, we crossed the Cascade range to Princeton, a distance of 75 miles, in 3 days, and following the beautiful valley of the Similkameen, we reached the custom house at Osoyoos on the 8th of September.

From Osoyoos we proceeded by way of Rook Creek where we found several Chinese men and 5 white men employed in mining on the lower portion of the stream. The latter were taking out from 6 to 8 dollars a day to the hand, and from information I was enabled to gather on the spot it only requires an inlay of miners to develop the resources of this once famous creek.

After leaving this we followed the N-why-ahpit-kwu, or Kettle river, as far as Boundary creek, where we left the old Colville trail and proceeded by the new Hudson Bay Company's trail, which continues through British territory and after some 15 miles strikes the old trail again on the Grande Prairie. With the exception of a very few miles the entire route from Rook Creek lies through a fine rolling prairie country, thinly wooded and abounding in bunch grass.

The Grande Prairie is a magnificent level, a breadth of some 15 miles in length by 3 in breadth, admirably adapted for grazing and agriculture; it is almost encircled by the Kettle river, the banks of which for some distance on either side consist of a deep rich soil.

My intention was to have continued on the new trail to Fort Shepherd, without passing into American territory, but on learning from the Indians whom we met on the Grande Prairie that the trail from Fort Shepherd to the Kootenay lake was extremely rough and bad for horses, I deemed it prudent to proceed to Fort Shepherd by way of Colville, where I was enabled to have some of the horses, which had become foot sore, properly shod at the United States barracks, through the kindness of the officer in command of the garrison.

At a delay of two days at Colville we started for Fort Shepherd, a newly established trading post of the Hudson Bay Company, situated in a wild and barren spot, some two miles northward of the Boundary Line, and forty miles from Colville.

As the trail at present exists it would be impossible for packers to pass through this portion without carrying food for the animals. There is good feed about 12 miles from Fort Shepherd and again at the Summit of the mountains, which form the divide between the valleys between the valleys of the Columbia and Kootenay rivers. The distance from the first feed to the summit is 24 miles, and again from the summit to the Kootenay some 26 miles must be passed over without finding sufficient grass for more than one pack-train.

We struck the Kootenay river about four miles from the upper end of the great Kootenay or Flatbow lake. This portion of the valley is quite level and composed of rich alluvial soil, and much resembles that of Pitt river at this season, abounding as it does in swamp grass and rank vegetation; it is evidently one continuous tract during the earlier period of the year. The river itself is broad, steep and sluggish.

The Kootenay Indians are by far the finest specimens of the race that I have yet seen, and are among the few tribes remaining that have not been demoralized by contamination with the white man. I believe with few exceptions they have become converts to Christianity, and it was a pleasing sight to see the Chief of the tribe, who accompanied me on my road for some days, kneel down before each feast and thank God for his daily bread. They appeared much pleased with the few presents which I made them of needles, fish-hooks and tobacco, and during the time that we were within the district of the eastern tribes we were generally followed by a large cavendish. A large number were encamped in the valley at their fishing grounds; they were very friendly, and rendered us every assistance in helping to swim our horses and cross our baggage over the Kootenay river; this we accomplished with safety, usually parallel with the Boundary Line, having travelled some twenty miles up the valley after leaving the newly made trail.

On leaving the river we were obliged to diverge some 10 miles into American territory when we joined the Lewiston and Walla Walla trail, which follows up the Mooyie river to the Lake, from which the river takes its rise, through a thickly timbered and somewhat mountainous country,

where we found it very difficult to find food for our horses.

From these lakes to the mines, a distance of about 40 miles, the country again opens out, and nothing can exceed the grandeur of the scenery as we now approached the Rocky Mountains.

We arrived at the mines on the 26th day from Hope, and I cannot estimate the distance travelled over in this period at less than 200 miles, though in this it should be remembered that I include the detour of 30 miles, which I made by way of Colville.

I found about 700 men resident at the mines, and I was informed that at least 300 were out prospecting in the neighborhood; but although numerous reports of new and extensive discoveries reached the creek daily during my stay, I could obtain no information sufficiently authentic to place any credence in.

The mining is therefore at present entirely confined to one creek, called by the miners "Wild Horse Creek," which takes its rise within the confines of the Rocky Mountains, and flows into the Kootenay river, northward of the 50th parallel of Latitude. The creek is at present worked for about 4 miles, commencing some two miles from its junction with the Kootenay. I visited most of the claims, and found them all paying well, and with few exceptions, the entire community appeared well satisfied with the laws to which they were subjected.

At the time of my arrival, 50 sluice companies were at work, employing from 5 to 25 men, and taking out from \$300 to \$1000 per diem.

One hundred rockers were averaging from 2 oz. to 6 oz. per diem.

Eight companies have commenced running tunnels, into the side of the hill, but the Gold Hill Company was the only one sufficiently advanced to become remunerative; this company was taking out nearly an ounce "to the hand" per diem.

Four shafts were being sunk in the bed of the creek, but at the time of my departure no satisfactory results had been obtained, although all parties interested seemed confident of success.

Seventy men were employed in constructing a large upper ditch, some 5 miles in length, which was expected would be completed early in the present month, when more than 100 hill claims, which were lying over for want of water, would commence work. The few hill claims at present working are found to be richer than the bed of the creek, the opening of the ditch is therefore looked forward to with much interest.

Laborers were receiving \$7 a day, and the price of provisions enable them to live well for \$1 50 per diem.

A town of no inconsiderable size has already sprung up upon the creek. Four restaurants are established; the rate of charges for regular boarders average \$14 to \$15 per week. Numerous substantial stores have been erected. A large brewery had also been established, and had commenced working.

Great uncertainty prevails as to the period at which the winter fairy sets in, but it was expected that the severe frosts would not commence before November, and it was therefore the intention of Mr. Haynes to allow all claims to lie over from the 1st Nov. to 1st May.

From the number of log huts in course of construction, it is estimated that from 300 to 400 persons will winter at the mines. The gold taken from these mines is considered by the traders to equal the best Californian gold. The price at which it passes current on the creek is \$18 the ounce, and packers going down are glad to purchase at that rate.

I was very anxious to obtain some approximate return of the amount of gold taken from the creek during the season, but I found it impossible to do so. Careful accounts are kept by the miners of the receipts and disbursements for the week, but as each Sunday comes round the division of profits is made, or more properly speaking, there is a general square up, after which all accounts to that date are destroyed.

The camp is well supplied with all the necessaries of life. I enclose a list of prices of the chief articles.

It is confidently expected by the traders that there will be a rush of from 10,000 to 15,000 miners from the Boise country in the spring, and large supplies are still being sent down to the mines. On our return we met ten and twelve heavily laden pack trains daily. The entire supplies are at present packed up from Lewiston, Walla-Walla, Wallula, and Umatilla Landing, in Washington Territory, United States of Oregon. The cattle came direct from Salt Lake City, and are some of the finest I have ever seen.

The distances from these places are as follows: Wild Horse Creek to Lewiston.....342 miles. Do. do. to Walla-Walla.....408 do. Do. do. to Wallula.....438 do. Do. do. to Umatilla Landing.....453 do.

The present charges for packing from these places range from 20s to 24c per lb.

A trail through British territory, either by way of the Shuswap or Grande Prairie, cannot I think exceed 400 miles. The merchants of this Colony need therefore have little fear of being able to compete with the American merchants, when it is remembered to what enormously high tariff American goods are now subject.

Mr. Haynes had collected a large amount of revenues, considering the short time that he had been resident in the district. I found his Treasury to consist of an old portmanteau, which he zealously guarded by night and day, in the log hut in which he is at present living.

At the urgent request of Mr. Haynes I received him a portion of his responsibilities, by taking over some 75lbs. weight of gold. This I brought down with me, and have safely deposited in the hands of the Treasurer. It is an interesting incident for Mr. Evans, Mr. Bushby, and myself to remember that we were the first Gold Escort direct from the Rocky Mountains to the seaboard of the Colony.

We left the mines on the 1st of October, and I much regretted that time would not allow of my returning by some other route than the one I had already travelled over, as I feel very confident that for many reasons it is not the one to be adopted by the Government.

Since my return to New Westminster I have had that a surveying party has already started, by way of Kamloops and the Shuswap Lake. They will doubtless follow the

Indian trail, and strike the Columbia near the Arrow Lakes; but before any decision is arrived at in the matter, I am very anxious that the portion of the country lying between the Grande Prairie and the junction of the Kootenay and Columbia Rivers should be explored.

I am told by Mr. A. McDonald, who is resident at the Hudson Bay Company's Fort Colville, and who is well known as an experienced hunter, that, striking nearly due north from the Grand Prairie, there is a low divide, the commencement of which we could plainly distinguish, by which you are enabled to reach the Columbia with great ease, nearly opposite to the Kootenay River.

The entire country from Princeton to the Grande Prairie, a distance of some 160 miles, is almost free from timber; it abounds in food for cattle; the trail throughout is excellent, and with the exception of a small distance on the Similkameen, no expenditure would be required in improving it, and indeed little would be required in making the same into a wagon road.

The exploration of the short distance, I have referred to might easily be accomplished during the winter months, and if found feasible might be opened out in a very short time. I would therefore suggest for your consideration that Mr. Haynes be at once empowered to expend a small sum on this work.

I have little of sufficient interest to report relative to our return journey, which would excuse me for continuing this already lengthy report; we arrived at Hope in 24 days from Wild Horse Creek, having experienced most lovely weather; we had only to record two wet days throughout the whole period of our absence, and nothing can exceed the charms of this climate for a camp life.

We found game abundant over the whole trail, and were enabled without difficulty or delay, to keep the camp well supplied, though I must own that on occasions we had descended so low in the game list as to eat porcupine with a relish.

I cannot conclude this letter without expressing my sense of the admirable manner in which Mr. Haynes has carried out his duties under most difficult circumstances; arriving as he did with only one constable to assist him, among a body of 1500 miners from the adjoining territories, many of whom were known to be utterly regardless of law and order; he found them banded together making their own laws and meting out their own ideas of justice; each man, as many have owned to me carrying his life in his hands.

I have the honor to be, sir, Your most obedt. servant, ARTHUR N. BRON. His Excellency Frederick Seymour.

THE AMERICAN CONFLICT.—A History of the Great Rebellion, by Horace Greeley.—We have received from the agent, Mr. Venn, who is in Victoria making a personal call upon the inhabitants, the first volume of the above work. It is a well printed octavo book, illustrated by miniature portraits of the members of the Northern and Southern Cabinets, the celebrated generals of both sides, and the eminent opponents of the slave power, besides diagrams of battle fields, naval actions and places of historic interest. As a record of the political events of America since 1776 it promises to be the standard work. Certainly no man is better able to give a clear and succinct account of the warring political elements which culminated in the present rebellion than Horace Greeley. The work is appropriately dedicated to "John Bright, British Commoner and Christian Statesman, the friend of my country, because the friend of mankind." Mr. Greeley does not intend to publish the second and concluding volume until the contest is over. The difficulties of writing impartially and at the same time readable history have been with the best of men almost insuperable, and we cannot expect a man, who has been the most steadfast and persistent opponent of the slave power on the American continent, to be entirely free from prejudice in his narration of past and current events in connection with the slave states. Mr. Greeley, however, brings with him to the task a honesty of purpose and a clear intellect—attributes which will make his work infinitely superior to any other book of the kind that is already published. "I shall," says the author, "endeavor to show that while this war has been signalized by some deeds disgraceful to human nature, the general behaviour of the combatants on either side has been calculated to do honor even to the men who, though fearfully misguided, are still our countrymen, and to exalt the prestige of the American name." To sum up the subject of the work in Horace Greeley's own words, it is "How we got into the war for the Union, and how we get out of it."

List of Prices at Wild Horse Creek.

Table with 2 columns: Item and Price. Items include Flour, Beans, Bacon, Tea, Coffee, Sugar, Butter, Beef, Mutton, Candles, Tobacco, Gun Boots, and Knee Boots.

Tuesday, November 15, 1864.

THE NEWS.

Our news from the seat of war is gradually becoming devoid of excitement. The Presidential election approached, the political content seems to have swelled the belligerent feelings of both Federal and Confederate; for on the issue of bloodless battle, both parties know or peace will depend. While the South are viewing with bated breath the political throes of the Northern States, hoping, with all the fervor of a poet that have tasted in such unmeasured ties the horrors of a devastating war, McClellan will be the choice of the anti-slavery party of the North, causing the success of their great cause, cause of humanity, however paradoxical may appear, on the return of Lincoln the continuation of the war. In the time, Grant still pushes "on to Rio He is not advancing so rapidly to the London Times desires; still his are scarcely slower than those of W before St. Sebastian or of the allies of Sebastopol. Hood is again three Sherman's communications, and She again forced to keep his troops spread the long line of railway between Atlanta and Chattanooga. There is abundance of the intelligence of startling operations they may be taken as simply electric sensations. They are not, however, Lincoln manufacture; for we find the lion of false statements about the war, and so important that Lincoln is obliged to come forward and declare truthfulness. The principal of these trifling rumors is that Sherman has evacuated Atlanta. On the other side, he remarkable piece of strategy attributed Grant of allowing his antagonist to do many reinforcements as possible in on a Federal trap might be sprung to on whole Confederate army under Lee authority of this new feature in the movements is a Doctor of Divinity, Ross. Apart from these novelties, that the Confederate ram Albemarle has been blown up by a Federal torpedo boat in the North Carolina waters.

From England the news is equally of special interest. The telegrams from New York announce the death of the Duke of Newcastle, who had been laboring under a serious malady for the last nine months. Duke, although a man of no pre-eminence, has nevertheless figured large in the Councils of the nation. He has an important position of Secretary of War, critical period of England's history, as to his recent illness was Secretary of Colonies. He was a painstaking and arduous minister, and possessed the confidence of Her Majesty more than any other statesman. His loss will, however, socially rather than politically.

California. Horse town, Shasta county, has been destroyed by fire. In San Francisco it is asserted that Brannan has made a bet of \$10,000 that Lincoln will get ten thousand more votes than McClellan in the State. He claims W. T. Coleman to make a similar bet was declined. The campaign is being vigorously prosecuted by both parties, excitement is running quite high.

We learn that a courier has arrived from Fort Lapwai, from the Joco River, bringing the intelligence that a train of about 80 wagons, had been sent by the Indians between Fort Union and Benton, and all in charge of it, Major Owens, on whose life the owners of the Flatheads, was among the number. On Sunday night, about twelve Jim Walters and Charley Mitchell got personal difficulty, at the hired guard when each made a target of the other; eight or ten shots were fired. The damage was a slight wound in the head, the burly-guards badly scathed, general demolition of furniture, glass, etc., etc.

ANOTHER HEAVY SHIPMENT OF TEA FOR CHINA.—The bark Oracle, of the port of China yesterday, carried off \$40,000 worth of tea, besides 1,000 chests of goods valued at nearly \$75,000 more. She carries 200 Chinamen as passenger, majority of the people of the State. It is little idea of the extent and importance of the trade between this port and China extends to many millions of dollars a year. There are entire blocks in this city of Chinese merchants who trade exclusively in goods imported from that coast who do an enormous amount of business. Should the proposed line of steam between this port and China ever be established, it would increase the business on the nearly threefold, and add millions to the national treasury.

WHALENS IN PORT.—There is a larger number of whaling vessels in port at present than we have seen for many years. They continue to arrive every day. The bark Mercury, Coral and Day arrived, and more were in sight. There are twenty-four in the harbor and they bring an aggregate of 14,000 tons of oil and 100,000 pounds of whalebone. The largest number of such vessels ever before at one time would not much exceed half a dozen.

THE COMANCHER.—It is expected that a vessel, now nearly completed, will be ordered during the spring months, between the 15th and 18th of next month.